

NARRATIVE
OF THE
PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
General Synod,

Which met at *Dungannon*, 1739;

Relating to some SCRUPLES, against Subscribing the
WESTMINSTER CONFESSION of FAITH, re-
fer'd to their Consideration.

By RICHARD APRICHARD.



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Printed by SAMUEL WILSON and JAMES MAGEE.
M, DCC, XXXIX.

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By Richard A. Smith



BRITISH MUSEUM

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A

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OF THE

PROCEEDINGS, &c.



THOUGH I could not avoid looking upon the treatment I received, from the General Synod, to be highly injurious, yet I should not perhaps have thus publickly appealed to the Judgment of the World, had not many false representations of the Proceedings of that Assembly, relating to my Scruples, made it necessary. To undeceive the World, and to remove such impressions as have been made by wrong accounts of that Matter, the following Narrative is published ; In which, I am persuaded, there is nothing contain'd but real facts, nor any thing of importance omitted. As I had, in drawing it up, the strictest regard to Truth, I was unwilling wholly to depend upon my own Memory, and have therefore taken care to inform myself by others who attended the Synod, that I might be the more able to give a just account of what was there transacted. The observations I have made upon their proceedings

ceedings are such as naturally arise from an impartial consideration of them. If I have any where mistaken their Views, I hope I shall be forgiven; it was their Conduct deceived me. Tho' I have not perhaps always used the same Phrases, by which particular Members of the Synod chose to express themselves; I have no where, I am persuaded, departed from their Sense.

BEFORE I enter upon the Narrative I think it necessary to observe, that about two Years ago I received a Call, recommended by the Presbytery of *Armagh*, from that part of the Congregation of *Morne* which continued under their care*. Having passed the usual parts of Trial for Ordination, I was called upon to subscribe the *Westminster* Confession of Faith; which I refused to do, until some Passages of that Book, hereafter mentioned, shou'd be explained to me. As this was not done to my Satisfaction, I could not conscientiously Subscribe; the Presbytery therefore let me know, they could not, agreeably to Synodical Rules, proceed farther: for it seems they, that is the Majority of them, thought themselves obliged, by an Act made in that Case, to refer the consideration of that Matter to the Synod. But tho' this Act determined them to stop Proceedings, yet they did not think proper to regard that Part of it, by which they were obliged to transmit my Scruples to the several Presbyteries, which constitute the Synod; in order to their being considered by them, at their next general meeting. For which Reason, the following Synod which met at *Antrim*,

* It must here be observed that some Years ago the Congregation of *Morne* divided into two Parties; one of which continued under the Care of the Presbytery of *Armagh*, and is called, by some, the regular Party: The other, followed as their Minister, a man whose immoral Conduct disqualified him for being Member of any Christian Society; this is sometimes distinguished by the name of the irregular Party.

June — 1738, refused to take them under their consideration. They then also made a new Act, obliging me to give into the Presbytery not only my Scruples, but also the Reasons of them, in order to their being transmitted; which was accordingly done.

THE next Synod which gave occasion to this Paper I also attended. Commissioners appear'd from the regular Part of *Morne* Congregation, supplicating for my speedy Ordination. It was then moved that my Scruples should be taken under consideration. To this it was objected that there were Commissioners also from the other part of that Congregation, and therefore it was necessary that they should first be heard. Their Supplication was read, in which they declared they could not with freedom, become my hearers, and therefore desired the Synod might grant them Suppliers. It was then proposed that an attempt shou'd be made to unite the two Parties; to which it was added that the Synod ought not to embroil themselves with a Consideration of my Scruples. How unworthy this latter Motion was of a Christian Minister, and how inconsistent with that regard which such men ought to have for Truth, let the impartial World judge. It must be owned it was the Synod's duty to attempt uniting the divided Congregation of *Morne*; let it also be supposed reasonable that the regular part of that Congregation shou'd, to accomplish that End, drop the prosecution of their Call given to me, yet did it from thence follow that my Scruples, with the Reasons advanced to support them, shou'd not be considered? Was it not incumbent upon the Synod to endeavour to convince me that I held corrupt Principles, seeing they were persuaded, as was afterwards declared, that I did; and that my Reasons contained such; No, it appeared to be the opinion of some, that rather than embroil the Synod I must continue undeceived. But why shou'd they have embroil'd themselves? Why shou'd they have given way to indecent
Passion,

Passion, or Ill-nature, without which they could not have been embroil'd? Could they not calmly have considered my Scruples, and, agreeably to the Apostle's advice, have given me what information they were capable, in the Spirit of Meekness? And if any of them were apprehensive of the prevalence of a different Spirit in themselves, as no doubt some of them had reason, did it not become them to endeavour the suppression of it, or to refer the discussing the scrupled Doctrines to others who had more of the christian temper, rather than move, that the Synod should deny me their good offices; because they apprehended their own conduct would be faulty?

THE above Motion, however, for uniting at that time the Congregation of *Morne*, was not, for the following reasons, complied with; and consequently the latter, for not examining my Scruples, was rejected of course. The Commissioners from the regular part of the Congregation alledged, that tho' the other Party might then appear disposed to an Union, yet they could not depend upon them. The differences subsisting between them had been almost accommodated sometime before, and a prospect of a happy Union appeared. To accomplish which They, the regular Party, had made considerable condescensions, and yet in a few days all their hopes were frustrated, by the Others returning to their former irregular course. Tho' therefore they then also seem'd willing to unite, they had no assurance that they would not act the same part over again. To this it was added by a Member of the Synod, that, according to the Discipline of that Church, the irregular Party ought not to be taken under their care, until they had first acknowledged their offence. They had in contempt of the Presbytery, under whose direction they were, and contrary to their earnest advice, withdrawn from their care, and followed as their Pastor a Man of an immoral Character; and therefore, before they were again receiv'd
by

by them, they ought to make proper Submissions. Whereas the other Party had always continued under their direction, notwithstanding many discouragements they had been thereby laid under; And therefore not to proceed, as far as the Synod consistently cou'd, to grant their Supplication, would be giving them such treatment as They did not deserve. Upon this it was agreed that my Scruples, with the Reasons of them, which are here inserted, shou'd be taken under Consideration.

Scruples against subscribing the Westminster Confession of Faith with the Reasons of them.

The first Scruple is founded upon Chap. xxth, Paragraph 4th.—“ And for their publishing of such opinions—as are contrary to the Light of Nature, or to the known Principles of Christianity—they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against —by the power of the Civil Magistrate”. And also upon Chap. xxiii. Paragraph 3d. “ The Civil Magistrate — hath authority, and it is his duty to take order that Unity—be preserved in the Church, that—all corruptions and abuses in Worship and Discipline be prevented, or reformed, and all the Ordinances of GOD duly settled, administred, and observed; for the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call Synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of GOD.” These I could not subscribe for the following Reasons.

1st. If the preservation and advancement of mens civil Interests is the sole end of Civil Society, and if the sole end of Civil Magistracy is the preservation and support of that Society, then the End of Society must be the End of Magistracy; nor can this extend any farther than the civil interests of the other. Magistrates therefore, as such have no concern with matters purely religious.

gious. Their power they receive from the Society only ; but no Member of a Society can alienate his religious rights, because Religion is strictly a personal thing ; no Magistrate therefore can have any authority to judge for others in Religion, nor to punish for opinions purely such.

2^{ly}. IF Christ's kingdom is of a spiritual nature, and if it is not to be supported, or advanced, in the same manner that the kingdoms of this world are, then we may justly infer that temporal punishments inflicted by the Civil Magistrate are not proper to enforce the Laws of his Kingdom.

3^{ly}. IF Christ is sole King in his spiritual Kingdom, he alone has a right to make Laws for all his Subjects, and to him alone his Subjects are accountable. The consequence of which is, that he only has a right to punish them for Errors in Religion. If they are accountable to the Civil Magistrate for their Religious Sentiments, and may be proceeded against by him, then Christ is not sole King.

4^{ly}. IF the Magistrate has authority to suppress Error, he has also a right to use such force as may be sufficient for that End. If then a lower degree of punishment will not enlighten the erroneous person's Understanding, or his Conscience will not allow him to recede from his Error, a higher degree must be used ; and if he still persists in this opinion, the highest must be inflicted, tho' it should reach to the taking away his life. Suppose this Error to be in the lowest Class of hurtful opinions, he must be treated in this manner, that is, with the same severity, that he is who maintains the most pernicious and Heretical Principles. From whence the exorbitancy and unreasonableness of all such power in Magistrates appears.

5^{ly}, IT will be allowed, I presume, that every Man has a right to private judgment in matters of Religion. Is it not then reasonable hence to conclude, that the
Magistrate

Magistrate has no right to punish men for their opinions which don't affect the State? If the Magistrate may punish, he must be allowed also to judge; for a power to punish without a liberty of judging what he is to punish, is a power to do he knows not what; that is, no power at all. But if he has a right to judge for others, they have no right to judge for themselves; a power therefore in Magistrates to punish for opinions purely religious, is destructive of our rights as Men, and is consequently unreasonable.

6ly, To punish men for following the Dictates of their Consciences, where Civil Society is not injured thereby, is contrary to the Genius of the Gospel, which breaths nothing but Meekness and Gentleness. It was not propagated by any other force at first than that of persuation and argument; nor did ever Christ give any Direction that it should in after ages, when the powers of this World should acknowledge Subjection to his Kingdom.

Lastly, GRANTING a power to the Civil Magistrate to use force in matters of Religion, tends to expose true Christians to continual Violences. For as every Denomination of Christians think themselves to be the Orthodox, the Magistrate of each Party must think himself obliged to persecute and destroy all who differ from him. By which means the World wou'd become a Theatre of Blood and Confusion, and not the greatest Heretick, but the weakest Party, tho' the best Christians perhaps, wou'd suffer most.

THE Second Scruple is founded upon Chap. xth Par. 4th.——“ Much less can men, not professing the Christian Religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their Lives according to the Light of Nature, and the Law of that Religion they do profess.”—This Doctrine I could not subscribe for the following Reasons.

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1st. BOTH Reason and Revelation represent GOD to us as a good and holy Being, who is pleased with the real and sincere endeavours of his Creatures to know his Will, and to live agreeably to that knowledge when acquired; but a Heathen is allowed thus to behave. Who therefore can affirm that he may not, thro' Jesus Christ, become the object of divine liking and approbation.

2^{ly}, THE Deity is represented as requiring no more of men than a proportionable improvement of their Talents, but a Heathen, supposed to use all possible diligence to frame his Life according to the Light of Nature, the only Law he has to walk by, makes the best use of his Talents. Will any thing more therefore be required of him? If he be damned, it is not because he has not improved his Talents, but because he has not those advantages he never had an opportunity of having. But GOD is not a severe or cruel Lawgiver, requiring obedience from his Subjects to whom his Laws have not been promulgated.

3^{ly}, THE Apostle assures us* that *not the hearers but the doers of the Law shall be justified; and again, that the work of the Law is written upon the hearts of the Gentiles or Heathens*. If then the Law be discoverable by them, and they use all possible diligence to frame their Lives according to it, are they not doers of the Law in the same sense that Christians are said to be such, and may they not be justified?

4^{ly}, Is not consigning over to eternal misery any particular Person or Set of men, pointed out, inconsistent with Christian Charity? And is it not also setting ourselves up as Judges of them in his place, to whom alone judgment does belong?

THE Third Scruple is founded on Chap. xvith, Par. 7th, "Works done by unregenerate men — are sinful

* Rom. ii. 13, 14, and 15 verses, see ver. 26. also.

“ and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive Grace from God. And yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing unto God.” There it is asserted that unregenerate men cannot perform any action pleasing to the Deity. If they act they sin, and if they forbear to act, in some cases, they sin worse. The following considerations engaged me to refuse the Subscription of this Doctrine.

I observe that our inward Frame is a complex one, made up not only of a Moral Principle, but also of various Affections and Passions ; which, in a right Constitution, are subject to this Principle, as to the Gratification of them. He therefore is a good and virtuous man, who in the main guards against the gratification of his Affections and Passions ; when he cannot have the approbation of the Moral Principle : And the contrary conduct constitutes the character of a vicious and immoral man. But may not an unregenerate man, tho’ in the main he gratifies his Passions without regard to the governing Principle, at some time exercise good Affections, and perform actions with the approbation of that Principle? certainly he may. And can these then be called sinful? If they be, for what reason are they so called? Because, says the Confession, “ they do not proceed from an heart purified by Faith.” This it must be owned is necessary to denominate a person good in the main, but not every particular action; for if it proceed from kind and social Affections, if these are good, so must the action also. But “ it is not done according to the Word.” If it be perfectly agreeable to the Moral Frame, it must be agreeable to the Word too. But “ it is not done to a right End the Glory of God.” And can we have this in view in every action of our lives? The bare absence of this End can evidence no Evil, otherwise it would be a crime not to have it always in view. But how could we then think of any thing else ; since no finite mind can retain a mul-

tiplicity of objects, nor always any one object? And if the bare absence of this Idea be not evil, the presence of kind Affections to our Fellow Creatures cannot be evil, but must be good. But further, if there be nothing in an action not proceeding from a right Principle, and not done with a right view, which can render it approv'd by the Deity, then it must be absolutely condemned by him. Why then is the neglect of it more highly disapprov'd, or why is the doing of it, so circumstanced, less displeasing than the neglect of it? Because perhaps, "for the matter of it, it is a thing which God commands;" but it is not done because he commands it, otherwise it would be done to a right End. But it is of good use to themselves and others, therefore it is less displeasing to God. If then the good effects of actions take away any degree of his disapprobation, an action intended to produce a high degree of Evil, if it, contrary to the intention of the Agent, produces a considerable Good, it is less displeasing to the Deity than an action intended to produce Good, but actually produces Evil.

THE Fourth Scruple is founded on Chap. i. Par. 10. "The supreme Judge, by which all Controversies of Religion are to be determined—and in whose Sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture." And Chap. xxth, Par. 2d. "God alone is Lord of the Conscience," &c. Also Chap. xxv. Par. 6. "There is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ." Compared with Chap. xxxi. Par. 3. "It belongeth to Synods and Councils ministerially to determine Controversies of Faith, and Cases of Conscience—which are to be received with Reverence and Submission; not only for their Agreement with the word, but also for the power whereby they are made."

If Synods or Councils may determine Controversies of Faith, and Cases of Conscience, and enforce these Determinations

Determinations under the Penalties of non-communion, and Punishments inflicted by their Civil Magistrate, is not this usurping ecclesiastical Supremacy, and lording it over the Conscience? How then are these Passages reconcileable? For these Reasons I could not conscientiously subscribe the above mentioned Doctrines of the Confession.

THESE Scruples and Reasons being publickly read, I was asked by the Synod, Whether they were the genuine ones given in to the Presbytery of *Armagh*, and whether I adher'd to them? To which I reply'd in the following manner. " Before I give an Answer to the " Question now asked, I beg leave to request that the " Synod, seeing they are pleas'd to enter upon a discussion of the scrupled Doctrines, will allow me to offer " such arguments as may appear to me fit to illustrate " any Point which may come under Consideration. " They shall be given in such a manner as will afford no " just cause of offence. At the same time I expect to " be treated with decency and good manners. I also " humbly hope the Synod will favourably ascribe my " scrupling the subscription of those passages in the " Confession, which have been now read, to a sincere " regard to the integrity of my Conscience. It was " from this Principle I at first propos'd Scruples, and " not from any Party views or attachments; and I " now come unprejudiced, and willing to receive every " Doctrine contained in the Confession, when it comes " recommended with the evidence of Truth. I am concern'd I have reason to complain of having been basely " misrepresented as the Tool of a Party, as a person who " acted not from any regard to Truth, or the dictates " of Conscience. It is a most injurious and groundless " Reflection. I wou'd have this Synod know, I speak " it not out of Contempt of them, I would think " it beneath me to become Tool to any Member of " of the Synod, any Party in it, or the whole Synod " taken

“ taken together. If there be any present who are
 “ conscious of having represented me as such, I hope
 “ they will condescend to give their reasons for it (they
 “ shall be excused upon the least appearance of reason)
 “ otherwise let the world look upon such as Defamers.”
 To this no man reply'd, tho' there were many present
 who had made such a representation of me; and I cou'd,
 as I afterwards propos'd, if it was insisted upon, have
 pointed out some of them. I then acknowledged that
 the scrupled passages, and Reasons read, were the genuine
 ones given to the Presbytery, and that I resolv'd to ad-
 here to them, until I saw reason to alter my opinion.

THE Synod having receiv'd this answer, it was
 moved that they should enter upon an examination
 of my Scruples, and endeavour to convince me that
 there was no foundation for them. Hereupon a
 Member desired that the several Presbyteries might
 be asked, if any thing had been written by them with
 that view. Enquiry being made, one of *Tyrone* Pres-
 bytery produced a Paper, which he seem'd to consi-
 der as a sufficient defence of the Confession, but would
 not as he said, call it his.

THIS Paper was publickly read, but did not at all en-
 lighten my Understanding, as to the doctrines scrupled
 by me; nor can I be perswaded it was designed for that
 purpose. It contain'd Remarks upon a late Pamphlet,
 entituled, *A Serious Address to the Church of Scotland*,
 and discovered the Author's skill in refuting some sup-
 posed Principles of the greatest Heathen Philosophers,
 which neither they maintained, nor I defended. But be-
 sides these, it was filled with most bitter insinuations,
 and almost in every Page a new charge of Heresy was
 advanced against me. I therefore thought myself oblig-
 ed to make some remarks upon it. In order to which
 I apply'd in the following manner for the perusal of it.

“ That Gentleman has had a considerable time to
 “ draw up that Paper in answer to my Reasons, which
 “ have

“ have been at least five or six months under his consideration. I beg the perusal of it for twenty four hours only, and do undertake then to give an Answer to it. Nay least that should detain the Synod too long, let it be granted me till to morrow at ten” (it was then evening) “ and you shall have my remarks.” To this the Gentleman reply’d that I might have a Copy, but the Original he would not part with. As his Paper was long, it could not be transcribed in a short time. I therefore made it my request that it might again be read Paragraph by Paragraph, and I wou’d without further deliberation give them my Remarks upon it. But even this most reasonable demand was refused.

THIS one part of the Synod’s, that is the high party’s Conduct, is sufficient to discover to every unprejudiced considerer what their views were. It appears they had no Intention to remove my Scruples in a Christian manner, or to support what shou’d, upon strict enquiry, appear to be truth. No; truth, it was taken for granted, was contained in every Article of the Confession, and a Paper, which was neither honour nor Support to it, read to prejudice (as appeared) the hearers against me for daring to call it in question. But allow that that Paper contained some reasoning in it, yet if that reasoning did not appear to me conclusive, while my Exceptions to it remain’d, my Scruples against the Doctrines, it was brought to support, must also remain. Had it then been the Managers intention to convince my Judgment, how could they have consistently deny’d me a fair Opportunity of proposing my objections to the Paper. Nay would they not rather have enabled me to put them in the most advantageous light, that they might have had the better opportunity of removing them to my conviction? It is true I was not afterwards deny’d the liberty of making such remarks as occurred upon hearing it once read: but as it was long, and confusedly written, and nothing in it afterwards illustrated,

it was not easy to see the strength of the reasoning, if it had any, or to retain any considerable part of it. Had the Synod declared, as it was insisted they ought for their own honour, that they did not rest the defence of the Confession upon that Paper, had this been done, and any thing stronger offered, I wou'd then have thought myself obliged to judge more favourably of their intentions. But as there was not any one Argument advanced but what the Paper contained, it clearly appeared, from their refusing me the perusal of it, and even that it should again be read for my further information, that they had no design to remove my Scruples, but rather to expose me to the Contempt of that Assembly.

DID the High Party herein act as men who regarded our Saviour's most excellent Precept † *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them.* At the preceeding meeting of the Synod they would not enter upon the Discussion of the Doctrines scrupled by me, because an account of them had not been transmitted to the several Presbyteries, "That all might have their deliberate thoughts of them." Tho' the Book I refused to subscribe, contains only, as they say, the important Doctrines of Christianity, which Doctrines, they are, or ought to be, in the course of their Ministry, employ'd in inculcating upon their peoples minds, and enforcing with the strongest arguments, yet even the defence of these they would not undertake, until I shou'd, a considerable time before their meeting, not only let them know which of them I scrupled, but also give them my reasons for so doing. This they thought necessary for *their* information, and yet they deny'd *me* the benefit of hearing their defence a second time read.

HAVING thus discover'd their partiality, and unwillingness more particularly to examine the scrupled Doc-

† *Matth. 7. 12.*

trines, they thought proper to appoint a Select Committee to converse with me, that the matter, as was said, might be prepared for the Synod's determination.

It must be owned this was no impolitick Scheme. They first had a paper read, which was written with a very unchristian Spirit, and filled with almost every hard name which Party-zeal could suggest, such as Papist, Socinian, Quaker and several others as obnoxious. This Paper passed as a sufficient answer, with some, to the reasons of my Scruples, and was well calculated to prejudice the injudicious hearers among the People, and some of the weaker Brethren, against me and my Principles. And then, lest any of the ill impressions made by it shou'd be removed, or the Confession lose any of its credit by a publick debate, a Committee was appointed privately to converse with me. I can't avoid acquitting that select Body of having any such unworthy Views. Their treatment of me, which was such as became Gentlemen and Ministers, gave me reason to believe they had not. Nor did I clearly see the Managers designs, until they afterwards betrayed the secret, by refusing to acquiesce in that part of the Committee's report which did not make for their purpose.

WHEN the Committee met, the following Declarations of my Sentiments concerning those Doctrines, to which my Scruples referr'd, were drawn up by me.

“ Magistrates ought to be invested with a power to
“ suppress Blasphemies, and Errors subversive of the
“ rights of religious and civil Societies.

“ Christians are only to hope for eternal happiness upon the Gospel terms, which are Faith in Christ, Repentance, and obedience to his Laws. At the same
“ time, I know not but God may save some who are
“ not within the Christian Church, in a way best known
“ to himself.

“ Regeneration is absolutely necessary to our pleasing
“ God, so as to obtain eternal Happiness.

C

“ Synods

“ Synods and Councils have a right to give their opinions concerning controversies of Faith, and cases of Conscience : At the same time, their opinions are not binding upon the Consciences of others, otherwise than as they are agreeable to the Word of God. I am also satisfied that a regard is due to the Ministry, as it is an ordinance of Christ.”

To the first of these it was objected by a Member of the Committee, that instead of (OUGHT) it shou’d be (ARE,) by which he intended to signify, as he explain’d himself, that Magistrates derive thier power immediately from God. To this it was answered, “ That tho’ it is agreeable to the will of God that there shou’d be Magistrates, yet their power they receive immediately from the People.” To the latter part of the same Declaration, the same Member objected, “ That by it, Magistrates are only empowered to protect men in professing according to their private opinions, whereas his power in Religion extends farther.” To this I reply’d, “ If Mens religious opinions are not destructive of the rights of Christian or Civil societies, they do not come under the Magistrates Cognizance.” It was then further ask’d, “ How this Declaration was consistent with the first Reason advanced in support of my first scruple.” To which I answer’d; “ I am not so attached to any of my Reasons, as not to be willing to give it up, If I find it insufficient.” There does not however, upon mature consideration, appear to be any such inconsistency, as was insinuated.

If the Magistrate secure to me my civil Rights, which include, in the notion of them, my natural ones also; I can’t see how my religious Rights can be taken from me. No man can hinder me to judge for my self; nor is there any other way of preventing my professing according to my judgement, than by depriving me of my Property, my civil Liberty, or offering me Violence. If then the Magistrate secure these Rights to me, which,

as a member of Civil Society, I am entitled to, my religious ones I enjoy of course. To the other Declarations there was not, that I remember, any objection made.

I THINK it necessary here to observe, that the above Declarations, which seem'd to give general Satisfaction to the Committee, either don't come up to the doctrines, in the Confession to which they referr, or are contrary to them. The first, concerning the Magistrates power, gives him a right only to suppress Blasphemy, and whatever is subversive of the rights of Christian and Civil Societies. Whereas the Confession empowers him to punish Men for publishing any opinion (of how little consequence soever it may be) which is contrary to the Light of Nature, or the known Principles of Christianity. The second is directly contrary to the Doctrine, as it stands in the Confession, to which it refers. It owns a possibility of the Salvation of some Heathens: whereas the Confession absolutely damns them all. This will clearly appear by comparing the scrupled Article, Chap. 16. Par. 4. with Chap. 8. Par. 8. and Chap. 10. Par. 1. In the first of these it is affirmed that men not professing, &c. † In the second that to ALL those for whom Christ has purchased Redemption he doth reveal in and by the *Word* the mysteries of Salvation. The third cited place, puts this matter beyond dispute. It asserts that ALL those whom God hath predestinated unto Life—he is pleased to call by his *Word*. But the greatest part of the Heathen world has not been called by the *WORD*; therefore none such, according to the Confession, are predestinated unto Life, and consequently they must be damned. In the third declaration, I have said that Regeneration (that is, as I understand it, a renovation of heart and Life, from former Sin and corruption) is absolutely necessary to our pleasing God, so

† See Page 9.

as to obtain eternal happiness: But it does not from thence follow, that unregenerate men, as the Confession asserts, cannot do one action in their whole Lives pleasing to God, or that all their actions are sinful, and that yet their neglecting some such actions is more sinful, than their doing them. As to the fourth, I wou'd be satisfied to pass it, if the meaning of determining Controversies of Faith, and Cases of Conscience, be no more than giving opinions about them, when such opinions are not binding upon other mens Consciences, otherwise than as they are agreeable to the Word of God; especially seeing every man must be allowed, in matters of a religious nature, to judge what is agreeable to the Word of God, and what is not. But I have reason to believe that more was intended by the Compilers, since their decrees must be received with *Reverence and Submission*, because of the *power* whereby they are made, as well as on account of their agreement with the *Word*; and also because by the Text, * adduced in support of that Article, it appears that the Confession gives the same power of binding and loosing to Synods and Councils, which our Lord thought proper to give to his inspired Apostles. I should not have given myself the trouble thus to show, how far the Declarations of my sentiments, drawn up in the Committee, differ from the Confession, had it not been represented, and industriously published, as an instance of my dissingenuity, that I was ready to comply with any thing proposed by them, and that I acknowledged my Satisfaction with the Doctrines scrupled as they stood in the Confession.

THE next morning the Synod was acquainted with the Satisfaction the Committee had received from me, and my Declarations were publicly read. Upon

* Matth. xviii. 18.

which it was proposed, to bring the matter to a conclusion, that Judgment shou'd be given concerning them. Here the Synod found themselves pinched. Had they approved the declarations, they wou'd thereby have given up part of the Confession, which they seem'd resolv'd to retain at any Rate; and by rejecting them as unsatisfactory, they would have contradicted the Judgment of their Select Committee, by whom they were generally approved, and also have laid themselves under a necessity of entering into a debate upon the Scrupled Doctrines. To extricate themselves out of these circumstances, they hit upon a lucky expedient; which was, to withhold their Judgment until I shou'd first be brought into an Inquisition, and examined upon what had no connexion with the point under their consideration, and consequently did not lye before them. This inquisitory discipline they introduced by asking me, whether I was willing to subscribe the remaining part of the Confession not scrupled? My answer to which was in the following manner.

“ By the question now asked it appears my Sincerity
 “ is suspected by the Synod. They must suppose, other-
 “ wise their question was unnecessary, that I will hereaf-
 “ ter subscribe the remaining part of the Confession, not-
 “ withstanding some concealed Scruples against it. I
 “ have already satisfied the Committee upon that head,
 “ and am still of the same opinion: and the Synod need
 “ not entertain any fears of being imposed upon; I will
 subscribe nothing but truth. If this don't afford Satis-
 faction, I have no more to give.”

It must be owned some of them did disclaim all Suspicion of Insincerity in me. I could not help however concluding from their Conduct, that some Suspicions were entertain'd, if actions are allowed to be the strongest indications of mens real sentiments. Upon receiving the above answer, the Synod was again warmly pressed to give their Judgment, by some of their Members,
 who

who alledged that my *Scruples only* were referred to them; these alone lay immediately before them, and therefore whatever related to them they ought to determine before any new demands could with Justice be made upon me. To which let it be added, that it would be thought highly unreasonable in any Civil Judicature to refuse to acquit or condemn a person, accused of a crime, until he should first clear himself of a second, with which he was never charged. And yet such was the conduct of the Synod towards me. Notwithstanding the warmest entreaties of many Members (who alledged it would be highly dishonourable to the Synod, upon any Pretext whatever, to depart from their proper and immediate business) they would determine nothing, until I wou'd first satisfy them upon a point which did not lye before them, and which they had no reason to be dissatisfied with me about.

WHEN reasoning made no impression, there was no other method left of bringing the matter to a conclusion, but to determine it by a vote. The following was proposed as the State of it. " Shall the Synod give their Judgment concerning Mr. *Aprichard's* Declarations, and he afterwards satisfy them as to his willingness to subscribe that part of the Confession not scrupled; or not?" This state of the vote was objected against, and the following one proposed. " Shall Mr. *Aprichard* first satisfy the Synod as to his willingness to subscribe that part of the Confession not scrupled, and the Synod afterwards give their Judgment concerning his Declarations; or not?" To determine whether the first or second of these shou'd be the state of the vote, a previous one was put, *viz.* " shall the first or second be the state of the vote? It carried, by the High party and the body of the Elders in favour of the second, tho' there was a *Majority of Ministers* for the first, as can be made appear by men of undoubted Credit, who

carefully

carefully marked the Voices. Against this vote the undernamed Ministers protested, viz. the

Reverend Messieurs

GEORGE CHERRY.	THOMAS MACLAINE.
JOHN MENAGH.	NEHEMIAH DONALDSON.
ARCHIBALD MACLAINE.	DAVID HARVEY.
JOHN MAXWELL.	WILLIAM AMBROSE.
JAMES MOODY.	— WELSH.
ALEXANDER Mc.COMB.	JOHN Mc.CONNEL.

I THOUGHT it proper, particularly to mention such of the Protesters names, as I could remember; because many of them are not entered into the Synod's Records; tho' that omission was complained of, in the sederunt after the Protest was entered; and assurance then given that they should.

The reasons of their Protestation are.

1st, BECAUSE Mr. *William Boyd's* looking about, when the two States of the vote were put, and saying, *This is our State of the vote*,† had a tendency to influence some of the Members.

2^{ly}, BECAUSE the first state of the vote was carried by a considerable Majority of Ministers, who must be supposed to be better qualified than the other Members to judge in such matters.

3^{ly}, BECAUSE Mr. *Aprichard* having, in compliance with the appointment of the Synod, declared his sense of those doctrines, to which his Scruples refer, had a

† As if he had said, my Brethren, I'm sensible many of you are not capable to determine, which State of the Vote is most reasonable. At the same time, I doubt not but you are very well disposed implicitly to follow me and my Party. I therefore think it proper to let you know, that the second is the true, orthodox, and our State of the Vote.

right to know whether that sense gave satisfaction to the Synod, before any other demands could of right be made.

4^{ly}, BECAUSE that great numbers both of Ministers and others waited to know whether the Synod would accept of Mr. *Aprichard's* Declarations as satisfactory, or if they would pin him down to the letter of the Confession.

5^{ly}, BECAUSE Intrants, if that method had been come into; which we reasoned for, would have known what treatment they might expect, and a good deal of future trouble to the Synod, in affairs of this nature would be prevented.

6^{ly}, BECAUSE by the conduct of the Synod the most effectual discouragement is given to all free Inquiry into matters of a religious nature, and Candidates for the Ministry, are laid under the strongest temptations, to Hypocrisy and dissimulation.

7^{ly}, BECAUSE the Synod has gone beyond the rigour of the Act made in 1725, which enjoins nothing more, than that the Scruples propos'd be laid before them, in order to their being considered by them.

LASTLY, because a tedious and labour'd answer to Mr. *Aprichard's* Reasons for his Scruples, stuff'd with ill natured Insinuations, was read, with a view, as appeared to us, to prejudice the Audience against him; and tho' he earnestly desired to have the perusal of that Paper for twelve hours, or if that would not be granted, that it might be read Paragraph by Paragraph, that he might have an opportunity to make an off hand reply; yet neither of these Requests were granted.

THE Gentlemen, above named, having offer'd these Reasons of Protestation against the vote pass'd; the Synod was again apply'd to, to review their conduct; not to proceed upon the measures propos'd, to make no consideration, foreign to their proper business a pretence of departing from it. It was all in vain. They had already

dy succeeded well in *voting*, and they were resolv'd to try it again. The Elders, most of them, were their faithful friends; and they did not doubt of being supported by them. The second state of the Vote, already mention'd, was put; viz. " Shall Mr. *Aprichard* " first satisfy the Synod as to his willingness to subscribe " that part of the Confession not scrupled, and the Synod afterwards give their Judgment concerning his " Declarations; or not." It carried in the affirmative. Against this Vote, also the same number of Ministers, one of which was the Revd. Mr. *Pat. Plunket*, protested. Their Reasons are.

1st. Because from the Temper of the Synod and the treatment given to Mr. *Aprichard*, he had no reason to expect, that if he had declared his assent to the remaining Articles of the Westminster Confession, against which no scruples were offered, that the Synod would have been satisfied with him.

2^{ly}. BECAUSE Mr. *William Boyd*, who was supported by a strong, that is a numerous Party in the Synod, alledged, that the Reasons offered by Mr. *Aprichard* in support of his Scruples contained more corrupt Doctrines than the Scruples themselves. And when he was called upon, by Mr. *Aprichard*, to point out such corrupt Doctrines, he declined to do it; by which it appeared, that neither he nor any of his Party, had any intention to remove his Scruples, in a christian and reasonable way, but rather to enflame the Audience against him.

THESE Reasons being also offer'd to the Synod, I was then asked, whether I was willing to subscribe the remaining part of the Confession? my Answer was in the following manner. " The treatment I have received from this Synod, gives them no reason to expect " further Satisfaction from me. Not to Mention the " many ill natured insinuations made, and opprobrious names given me, by some of your Members; you
D " have

“ have declined letting me know whether my Scruples, and the Declarations of my Sentiments concerning the Doctrines to which they refer, have, in your Judgment, any rational foundation, or not. This I am persuaded is not giving me such treatment as I have a right to expect from you. As you are Men you owe me your good offices, the best information you are capable of giving me ; as you are Christian Ministers you are more indispensibly oblig’d to this ; and as I am under your care the obligation lies still stronger upon you : by your Conduct it appears you think me unworthy even the common offices of humanity. What ground then have you to expect any further compliances from me ? However before I return a direct answer to your Question, I beg leave to take notice of some things contained in the Paper which was yesterday read. I shall not now enter farther into the merits of the Cause,” (the reason was I could not retain any considerable part of that long Paper) “ than is necessary to vindicate me from the imputation of some very obnoxious Principles, which the Author of it infers from the Reasons of my Scruples.

“ FIRST he represents me as maintaining the Doctrine of *passive Obedience, and Nonresistance*. I have asserted, in one of the Reasons of my scruples, that temporal punishments inflicted by the Civil Magistrate, are not proper to enforce the Laws of Christ’s Spiritual kingdom ; thence he infers, that if any man should offer me violence, which violence is a transgression of one of Christ’s Laws, I have not according to my Principles a right to resist him, or to apply to the Magistrate for redress. The conclusion it is evident, does not follow from the premises. He who offers me violence, invades my natural right to self-preservation ; and I am as much at liberty to oppose such an Invader, as if he attempted to take

“ from

" from me any part of my property : but giving such
 " a person opposition, is manifestly different from at-
 " tempting to propagate Religion by Force, which I
 " alledged the Magistrate had no right to do." For
 the illustration of this Hint, I now take leave to add,
 that when I, or the Magistrate at my request restrains
 a man, who offers me a personal injury, he is to be
 considered as doing so, not to engage my Enemy to
 observe any of Christ's Laws as such, but the civil Laws
 of the Society by which my safety is secured. It is true
 the injurious person, by the restraint he is laid under, is
 prevented taking away my Life ; but can he for that
 reason be said to observe Christ's Law, which says, thou
 shalt not kill ? no ; no more than he can be called an
 honest man, who does not deprive me of my property,
 because he can't do it. What may put this matter I
 think beyond dispute, is this ; that the Magistrate does
 not, to be inform'd in his duty as a Magistrate, apply
 to the New Testament ; no, but to the Records of the
 Society's Laws, over which he is set. And these Laws
 he executes, without being suppos'd to consider, whe-
 ther they are agreeable to the Laws of Christianity, or
 not. That Gentelman's mistake seems to have been oc-
 casioned, by confounding a religious obedience of Christ's
 Laws, with a seeming observance of them ; when in
 reality it is only the observance of a human Law, made
 in the same Case. That Force which is used to secure
 the rights of Civil Society, may, in some Cases, pro-
 duce such a seeming obedience ; but surely this is not
 properly observing Christ's Laws, nor are the Interests
 of his spiritual kingdom thereby promoted. Every one
 knows, that that obedience only is acceptable to him,
 or to speak more properly, that that only is Obedience
 which is voluntary, and proceeds from religious prin-
 ciples. But where external force is applied, Liberty is
 taken away, and consequently Religion also. So that
 in truth it is impossible to enforce the observance of

Christ's Laws, by temporal punishments inflicted by the Civil Magistrate; and therefore they are improperly used for that purpose. Hence it appears, that resisting a person who invades our *civil rights*, and attempting to propagate Religion by Force, are very different things, have different views and tendencies; and consequently the one may be approved, and the other consistently condemned.

It would be no difficult matter to fix upon that Author, and all who are of his principles, the absurd and slavish doctrine of *passive obedience and nonresistance*, with which he has charged me. If it be the Magistrates duty, as he affirms, to use force in matters of Religion; it must be the Subjects duty, to yield either active or passive obedience; that is either to obey out of choice, or to suffer without Resistance, even when such force is unjustly applied. If to this it be objected, that he is only to exercise his authority in promoting Truth and Right, I ask, who is to judge what is Truth and Right, and what is not? If the Magistrate is to judge, he must exercise his authority as oft as his judgment directs him; and it is the Subjects duty to submit, tho' they are at the same time persuaded he is imposing Falshood and Vice. But if the Subjects are to judge what is Truth and Right, and ought therefore to be enforced by civil authority; then, either every particular person must do so, and consequently no man will approve of *Force* in matters of Religion, when he himself is to be affected by it; or the Society must judge: but this is taking away that right which every particular person has, to judge for himself, and setting up Establishments without Toleration. Or in other words, it is obliging such as dissent from the Judgment of the Society, passively to submit to the penalties, by which they empower their civil Magistrate to enforce their religious decisions. So that upon any supposition which can be made, the Doctrine of *passive Obedience and Non-resistance* is the necessary consequence of allowing the
 Magi-

Magistrate a right to use force in matters of a religious nature. It is most surprizing that neither that Author, nor others of his Sentiments, do understand the very Principles upon which they dissent from the religious determinations of the established Society; which is, that they have a right to judge for themselves in Religion, and ought not upon that account, to be distress'd by the Civil Magistrate. But

“ 2^{ly}, He represents me as maintaining the Popish
 “ doctrine of Merit, and Socinianism. I have supposed
 “ that God is pleased with the real and sincere endea-
 “ vours of his Creatures to know and do his Will, and
 “ that no more than a proportionable improvement of
 “ the Talents with which they are entrusted, will be
 “ required of them. I therefore think, it is venturing
 “ too far to say that a Heathen who thus behaves may
 “ not thro’ Jesus Christ become the object of divine ap-
 “ probation. Hence he infers, that I suppose such
 “ may be saved by the merit of their own Obedience.
 “ This Conclusion is just as natural as the former. To
 “ ascribe Salvation to Merit, is to say, that men are
 “ saved by virtue of their Obedience alone, without
 “ any regard to Christ. But have I said any thing like
 “ this? Have I not expressly said that we shou’d not
 “ venture to affirm that the sincere endeavours of Hea-
 “ thens are not acceptable to God thro’ Christ? And
 “ is this ascribing their Salvation to Merit? But because
 “ I supposed the possibility of their Salvation *thro’*
 “ *Christ*; he wou’d deny me the advantage of this, by
 “ alledging I intended the Phrase (*thro’ Christ*) in the
 “ Socinian Sense; which is this, that Christ’s example
 “ and Doctrine have a tendency to promote the salva-
 “ tion of men, and his Death, only so far, as it is an
 “ evidence of the Truth of his Doctrine. But how is
 “ it possible he can think, I look upon the Example
 “ and Doctrine of Christ, to be of use to men, who
 “ never had the means of knowing any thing about
 “ either of them? But, “ 3^{ly}, I

“ 3^{ly}, I AM charged with Quakerism. I have said
 “ we are endowed with a Moral Principle, which di-
 “ rects us to the performance of some good Actions;
 “ thence he infers I must be a Quaker, I speak of a
 “ Light within. But does not the Apostle † speak
 “ as strongly concerning a Moral Principle, or Light
 “ within, when he says, *the Gentiles which have not the*
 “ *Law do by nature the things contained in the Law,—*
 “ *which shew the work of the Law written in their hearts;*
 “ *their Consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts*
 “ *the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.* And
 “ is he not equally liable with me to ~~take~~ imputation
 “ of Quakerism? If then the Apostle was a Quaker,
 “ I am satisfied to be called one also.”

A 4th thing, which I could not avoid taking notice
 of, it was so very remarkable, was this; to prove that
 Unregenerate men, according to the doctrine of the
 Confession, can't do one action pleasing to GOD; he
 instanced in the Youngman in the Gospel, as he is call'd.
 Had he searched the New Testament he could not have
 found an Instance, which, as he applied it, lies stronger
 against the Doctrine it was brought to support. He was
 obliged to own that the Youngman had some good
 qualities, yet because he wanted some others he was re-
 jected by our Saviour; whence he inferr'd he could not
 do one good action. But may not a man who has not all
 good qualities, or is not possess'd of them in the highest
 degree, do some good actions? Was not this the very
 case of the person now referr'd to? When he had de-
 clared to our Saviour his strict observance of the Moral
 Law; it is said,* that Jesus beholding him loved him.
 But can it be supposed he could love a man who had ne-
 ver performed one good action? If the Youngman's con-
 duct was such as he represented it to our Saviour, he
 then certainly did some good action; but if it was not

† Rom. ii. 14, 15. * Mark x. 21.

his hypocrisy would have rendred him, not the object of Christ's Love, but of his displeasure. In order to render this Remark the clearer I have taken leave to express it more fully, than it was at first delivered.

Lastly, the Author of the Paper alledged, that the greatest Heathen Philosophers deny'd the necessity of Prayer. Whether he intended thereby to insinuate, that I also was of the same opinion, I know not : I thought it however proper to take notice of it in the following manner. " That Gentleman seems not to be sufficiently acquainted with the Principles of the greatest Heathen Philosophers, to determine any thing about them. Many of them, particularly *Plato*, *Socrates*, *Cicero*, and others also were convinced of the Importance of Prayer. *Plato* has a Dissertation, called his Second *Alcibiades*, in which this duty is recommended, and the manner of performing it pointed out to us. *Socrates* by practising it, has discovered his sense of the necessity of it. *Cicero*, who says, *Nemo unquam magnus vir, sine divino aflatu fuit*, that is, that no man ever became truly great without divine assistance, seems to have been of the same mind. For if he was persuaded that such Assistance was necessary ; it is to be presumed, he thought it reasonable, that men should address God for it." these were such Instances as then occurred to me ; but others stronger than some of them might be adduced.

I THOUGHT myself obliged, for the vindication of my Character, to take notice of these Passages of the Paper, already mentioned, in the Synod ; where it was read. And I now offer them to the Publick, that by this Specimen of the Author's reasoning, which is of a piece with the rest of that performance, they may judge what ground the Synod had to believe, that any Man of common sense wou'd be convinced by it. To the Remarks which were made, this only was objected by the Member who read the Paper ; that he had not affirmed, that

that the greatest Heathen Philosophers, deny'd the necessity of Prayer. With what Countenance he could assert this, I know not; after having assigned this as the reason of their looking upon the duty mentioned to be unnecessary, *that they thought themselves sufficient for virtue*. If he apprehends I have any where misrepresented him, the most effectual way he can take to undeceive the world, is to publish his Paper. If he thinks proper to do so, he should allow it to appear as it was, when read in the Synod. It then seem'd to be considered as a sufficient defence of the Confession by the High Party; under whose protection it may venture to come forth. So excellent a defence, with a seasonable Warning by way of Appendix, may be of great service to the Cause of Orthodoxy.

Having offered to the Synod my Remarks upon the Paper, I took leave to request that a Member who had affirmed I maintain'd corrupt Principles would condescend to point them out to me. That Member offered to speak, but being seasonably interrupted by a Friend, he sat down again, and did not think proper to gratify me with an answer, tho' I waited some time for it. I then told the Synod, I did not think myself obliged to give them farther Satisfaction than they had already received; and therefore desired they might proceed. For this part of my Conduct I offer the following reasons.

1st. THO' I am always ready to satisfy any disinterested and well disposed Person, who, in a friendly manner, asks my opinion of any of the christian Doctrines; yet I don't think myself obliged to gratify the demands of those, who are so attached to Party Interests and Schemes, that they will acquiesce in no reasonable Satisfaction, which a Person of different Sentiments can give. And such the Synod appear'd to me. Their Committee had, before, informed themselves, concerning my willingness to subscribe that part of the Confession not scrupled, and largely reported to them their satisfaction

tisfaction with me upon that Head. But tho' this was done by men, whose veracity no body, except some of the Synod, would have called in question; yet their Report was not depended upon. What Reason, then, had I to believe, that a categorical answer from me, who stood not so fair in their opinion, would answer any valuable End? If the Synod was determined not to acquiesce in their Committee's Report, why did they appoint them to receive satisfaction from me? And if they were resolved to rest in that; why did they again apply to me?

2ly, WHY should the Synod have discovered so much uneasiness, concerning my subscribing the remaining part of the Confession not scrupled; I had before subscribed without offering any Scruples; and they knew I must again subscribe, before Ordination. Should they not, therefore, have come to some resolution, concerning my Declarations, and referred the rest to the Presbytery, who would, no doubt, take care that I should come up to their terms, before they would ordain me. If they were dissatisfied with my Declarations, a regard to truth should have engaged them publickly to express their Disapprobation, with the reasons of it; by which means, my Scruples might perhaps have been removed. And if they approved them, the same Motive should have determined them to let it be known. By their refusing to give any Judgment upon them, it appear'd they had no Intention to remove my Scruples, or to give me any information; and consequently no right to further Satisfaction from me.

3ly, I DOUBT not but there may be other sincere Enquirers after truth, who have, perhaps, the same Scruples which I have, against subscribing the Confession. That such men might know, whether they were to expect any Indulgence upon making their Scruples known, it was necessary I shou'd refuse answering the

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Synod's Question, until they came to a final determination about mine ; because, it clearly appear'd, by their reserving their Judgment, that if I had first told them I was willing to subscribe the remaining part of the Confession, they would then have rejected my Declarations as unsatisfactory, without determining any thing concerning the confession.

Lastly, I WAS credibly informed, that instead of having any Disposition to bring matters to a friendly Issue, they were resolved, without giving themselves the trouble of further reasoning with me, to bring me to a renunciation of all my Scruples, that they might have an opportunity of exposing me effectually in their several Congregations, of discouraging such mighty presumption in young men for the future ; and of adding thereby a new support of synodical Authority. But to return.

AFTER the Synod had received my final Answer, the Reasons of Protestation, already inserted, were drawn up in writing, and publickly read. To the last of these Mr. *William Boyd* objected ; alledging he had not declined to point out those corrupt Principles, he had affirmed, I maintained. I then conceived new hopes of having my Scruples, with the Reasons of them more thoroughly examined. In order to which, I made it my Request that Mr. *Boyd* would, *then*, let me know what those Principles were which he referr'd to. But tho' he took upon him, without asking the Synod's leave, to affirm I maintain'd such ; yet, without their order, he would not dare to let me know what they were : because he knew his Party, for an obvious reason, would not desire him. However it was proposed that Mr. *Boyd* should let me have his thoughts by a private letter. To this it was reply'd, That would not answer the End. " The charge was advanced publickly ; let him make it good in as publick a manner, " or let him write from the Press, and he may expect

“pect an answer, not otherwise.” But as he had in open Synod represented me as a man of bad Principles, it was insisted on that the proper place to make good his charge, was in the Synod; because the Audience, which was, no doubt, prejudiced against me by his unsupported Allegations, would not otherwise have so good an opportunity of judging, whether there was any foundation for them, or not. When no answer was made to this, it was observed; that there was no ground to fear that the Audience would go away prejudiced. They had too much Candor and good Sense not to see by that time that he had nothing to say; because if he had, he would never have stood such teasing. This Remark gave me reason to hope, it would have the desired effect, when I saw the Gentleman once more stand up, to support his Charge; but being gently forbid by one of his Party, he sat down, and I was disappointed. Behold how the Prime Manager for the High Party avoided every thing, that might lead him to speak to the Merits of the Cause; notwithstanding he had, a day or two before, engaged **BY THE GRACE OF GOD**, to defend the Confession. And thus, to use the words of a modern Writer, “Did he walk up twice to the Point, and for no reason that I can see, but to shew his Baseness, and twice to run away from it.”

WHEN the Synod could not be prevailed upon to determine any thing concerning my Scruples, they were asked whether I shou'd be continued a Probationer in the Presbytery of Armagh as formerly. Herein they acted as they had done before, they would determine nothing. Because many of their Members were gone away, therefore they would not take upon them to come to any resolution upon an Affair which concerned the whole Church. To this it was answered, that in number they still exceeded the Presbytery, to which they were resolved to leave that matter; and therefore they

must be supposed more capable to judge, if any stress is to be laid upon numbers. But they still declined; for tho' they appeared full enough of Resentment, they could not well reject me for Principles concerning which they would venture to pass no Judgment.

THEIR Conduct in this was the more surprizing, because the very same argument they made use of, against their giving Judgment in this affair, was urged, with much greater appearance of reason, by the Nonsubscribers, in the year 1725, against the Synod's approving the Overture by which the Scruples of Intrants were to be transmitted to the Synod. "The Subject, said they, was of great importance; and there remain'd little more than one third part of the Ministers belonging to the Synod, who ought not to take upon them to explain the Sense of their absent Brethren, and to enforce their authoritative explications, as this Overture does, with severe Penalties affecting their ministry." Had this reasoning any weight with the Synod then? Did the smallness of their number discourage them from passing an act, enforced with the rigorous Penalties of Suspension and Deposition? No; it seems they voted the Overture, few as they were. The argument against it, cou'd not be good when it came out of the mouth of a Nonsubscriber; but was most convincing, when applied by an Orthodox Subscriber, to the case of my continuing, or not continuing, a Probationer in the Presbytery of *Armagh*. But was not the other, of vastly greater Consequence? Did it not, much more, concern the whole Church? Does it not affect all Presbyteries and Candidates in the General Synod? With what consistency then could they advance this reason for their conduct, when no regard was shewn to it, by the same men, as I'm inform'd they were, in a Case where it was beyond all comparison stronger? It was however the best they could advance, and they were resolved not to
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part with it. By this time I had sufficiently experienced the fruits of their Deliberations; and therefore thought proper to withdraw my Subjection.

I COULD not, in the foregoing Narrative, avoid, sometimes ascribing the treatment I received, to the Synod in general. I would have it therefore observed, that many Members of that Assembly, the greatest part of the Ministers, as well as some Elders, appear'd dissatisfied with it. I take this opportunity of acknowledging their Candor, and Impartiality. A high Party among the Ministers, and the body of the judicious Elders, whose votings outweigh'd the reasonings of their Brethren, are entitl'd to all the honours, arising from the Resolutions of the Synod.

As you therefore, Gentlemen, have distinguished yourselves by your extraordinary Zeal for the Confession, it is but fit you should satisfy the World, whether the Synod in 1725, of which many of you were Members, had really any design to indulge Intrants in refusing assent to any one Doctrine of the Confession. If they had not any such intention, where was the occasion for such an Act? What End can it serve but to expose Scruples to popular Odium? Why was it determin'd that "if any had Scruples about Doctrines, these should be transmitted to the several Presbyteries, that all might have their *deliberate thoughts of them* against the time of the Synod's meeting, and an opportunity of judging the Affair?" If they did design to indulge in some points, why was not that design regularly pursued? Why did you not determine whether my Scruples, were such as you would indulge, or not? Had I not a right according to one of your own Rules, to alter Phrase, or Phrases, in any part of the Confession? Ought you not then to have told me, whether the Phrases I made use of, to express my Sense of the Doctrines to which my Scruples referr'd, deserved your Approbation, or not?

not? You insist upon it, that your Decrees are to be received with Reverence and Submission, not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the Power by which they are made. Shou'd you not then have given me an opportunity of reverencing your Decrees? But you have not thought proper to do so. The only Determination you would come to, was, that you would determine Nothing. These were your *deliberate thoughts*; the glorious Result of six months consideration.

BUT supposing I have maintained some opinions which you did not think proper to indulge me in; what reason can you give the World, for refusing to tell me so, and for treating me with Insolence and Contempt; when I acted agreeably to your own Rules in making them known to you? And why should I have been singled out? Did not your own Committee in general, express, in open Synod, their Satisfaction with my Declarations? And are not these Declarations evidently proved to be either contrary, or not to come up to the scrupled Doctrines in the Confession? Nay have not some of your warmest Advocates, for Orthodoxy and Subscription, allowed the Salvability of some Heathens? And is it not manifest that such, and particularly the Author of the Paper, either don't understand, or disbelieve that part of the Confession by which it is absolutely denied?

LET me then beseech you to consider these things, to review your Conduct, and to compare it with the Laws of that glorious Gospel we all profess to believe. Have you discovered any of the temper and Spirit of it in your Behaviour towards me? Any of that Forbearance and Charity which thinketh no Evil, and which is so warmly recommended as the great End of the Gospel? Or have you acted as the Ministers of Christ, whose Business it is to propagate Truth, by all reasonable and Christian methods, and in meekness to instruct those
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who oppose themselves? You cannot say you have. An undue Regard to Popularity, and to human power in the concernments of Religion, seems to have had too great an Influence upon your Deliberations. And to preserve that power, and to keep the people in temper, not one Tittle of the Confession must be given up; tho' by your declining to reason upon the points in difference, it looks as if you were sensible, it was not capable of a Defence.

F I N I S.



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